



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications  
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

4300 Cherry Creek Dr. S.  
Denver, CO 80246

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**CONTACT:**

Brandon Williams  
Public Information Officer  
Prevention Services Division  
720-314-8299  
<mailto:Brandonw.Williams@state.co.us>

## **Thousands take first step to quit tobacco during Great American Smokeout**

DENVER — On Thursday, Nov. 15, thousands of people across Colorado will take the first step to quit using tobacco during the [Great American Smokeout](#), saving money and increasing chances for a healthier, longer life. Many will increase their chances of success by getting help from the [Colorado Quitline](#).

“The first step in quitting tobacco is setting a quit date,” said Emma Goforth, tobacco cessation expert at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. “The Great American Smokeout is the perfect day to quit, because it provides a community support system. Since tobacco is highly addictive, that first step can be the hardest, but once you quit for the day, you’re one step closer to staying quit for the rest of your life. That means more money in your pocket and a better chance for a long, healthy life.”

To make the first step easier, the Colorado QuitLine offers free, telephone-based coaching for Colorado residents who are ready to quit using tobacco. The Colorado QuitLine is available in English and Spanish and is open seven days a week at 1 800 QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669).

“Making the call to the Colorado QuitLine was the hardest part,” said [QuitLine participant Debra Duran](#). “I had to make myself the priority.”

Nearly one in six Colorado adults uses tobacco, and more than 80 percent of adult smokers became addicted to tobacco before the age of 18. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in Colorado, killing more than 4,300 people each year - more than alcohol or other drug use, suicide, homicide, motor vehicle accidents, fires and AIDS combined. It can lead to severe health issues such as heart disease, stroke and lung cancer and can shorten smokers’ lives.

Coloradans pay a huge price for tobacco use: more than \$2.4 billion in health care costs and lost productivity each year, which is a cost to each Colorado household of \$579 per year. The dollars an

individual spends on smoking or smokeless tobacco add up as well. A pack of cigarettes in Colorado is about \$5. For a pack-a-day smoker, that adds up to \$1,825 per year.

Tobacco use is one of [Colorado's 10 Winnable Battles](#) – health and environmental threats the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is working to reduce during the next five years.

### **About QuitLine**

Research shows that smokers who use [Colorado QuitLine](#) services are more likely to successfully quit than smokers who try to quit on their own. Trained coaches help individuals develop the confidence and coping skills to quit tobacco use and remain tobacco-free. The program consists of a bilingual QuitLine Call Center; proactive, positive coaching sessions; an online service for 24/7 support; provision of nicotine replacement therapy products to eligible participants; printed materials; and a text messaging program.

The Colorado QuitLine celebrates its 10th anniversary in December, having served more than 260,000 Colorado residents.